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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/51/3 (Parts I and II), A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/327, A/51/357 and A/51/450; A/C.3/51/L.2 and L.3)

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AGENDA ITEM 158: QUESTION OF THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST ORGANIZED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME (continued) (A/C.3/51/7)

1. Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakstan), referring to agenda item 102, and speaking also on behalf of Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, called for combined efforts by the international community to put an end to illegal drug trafficking, as one of the main areas of work of the United Nations. She supported concentrating the efforts of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) on the most urgent areas and supported the proposed special session of the General Assembly on international drug control. The work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board was also commendable. She called for the speedy implementation of the Board's proposals on measures to counter money laundering and fully supported the position of those two bodies on the inadmissibility of legalizing the non-medical use of narcotic drugs, which would undermine the international drug-control system. The firm position of the main United Nations anti-drug bodies on the negative consequences of legalizing narcotic drugs must not change.

2. The countries on whose behalf she was speaking urged greater use of the Organization's potential in exchanging information on experience gained in anti-drug cooperation and establishing close contacts among the regional organizations. Those countries were carrying out active measures to strengthen anti-drug cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States on a multilateral and bilateral basis. Illegal drug trafficking was on the rise in many States of the former Soviet Union. The seriousness of that problem and the spread of drug addiction and crime made it necessary to strengthen practical cooperation on the part of the competent authorities of the countries concerned. An agreement on cooperation among the Commonwealth member States in combating drug trafficking had been in effect since 1992, and joint measures were being drawn up to counter that scourge.

3. The Commonwealth office for combating organized crime was also active in the area of drug control, and a common databank on drug-related crimes and their perpetrators was being established. The countries on whose behalf she was speaking hoped to receive assistance from UNDCP in implementing specific technical-aid projects and looked forward to continuing their fruitful cooperation with the United Nations in that field.

4. Mr. Pe Thein TIN (Myanmar) said his Government pursued a drug-control strategy based on drug eradication and prevention and the elimination of poppy

cultivation through a comprehensive social and economic development programme. For over a century, the livelihood of the national races inhabiting the border areas of Myanmar had been poppy cultivation. His Government had devcted special attention to improving the infrastructure and living conditions in those areas. In 1992, a new ministry had been established in order to implement various development projects. A master plan had been drawn up in order to alleviate poverty, eradicate poppy cultivation, develop the economic and social infrastructure of the area, preserve the culture and customs of the national races, establish alternative economic enterprises and maintain security.

5. The development projects and resulting improvement in living conditions in those regions would contribute to international efforts to combat the drug menace. The measures taken had already yielded results. Numerous armed groups had laid down their arms in order to participate in development projects; and poppy cultivation and drug trafficking in certain areas along the border between Myanmar and Thailand had been eradicated.

6. His Government sought to cooperate more closely with UNDCP and neighbouring countries and was actively participating in the international campaign against illicit drug production and trafficking. Myanmar was unwavering in its commitment to eliminate poppy cultivation and drug trafficking and was ready to cooperate fully with its neighbours and UNDCP in that regard.

7. Mrs. EL KABBAJ (Morocco) said that international cooperation in the field of drug control should focus on demand-reduction measures and alternative-development programmes to tackle the root causes of drug trafficking and addiction. A collective sense of responsibility on the part of all countries, both producer and consumer countries, was required in order to establish effective international cooperation in the anti-drug effort. Worldwide measures were necessary in order to eliminate the threat posed by money laundering to financial markets, economic systems and the stability of States. She hoped that the proposed special session of the General Assembly in 1998 on international drug control would make it possible to strengthen international cooperation and bolster financial support for alternative-development programmes.

8. Morocco, which was determined to carry out its international commitments under drug-control conventions, was implementing an anti-drug strategy based on supply reduction, measures to combat illicit drug trafficking, and increased international cooperation. In 1996, her country had launched an intensive anti-drug operation which had led to the dismantling of drug-trafficking networks, the prosecution of drug traffickers and the seizure of drugs.

9. Her Government had drafted a law based on the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and resolutions of the General Assembly and international organizations on money laundering. It had also undertaken socio-economic programmes in cooperation with the European Union. She hoped that those measures would be supported by the appropriate United Nations bodies and that resolute cooperation could be established with Morocco's partners in the criminal-investigation and economic fields. She commended the efforts of UNDCP to mobilize resources, and expressed the hope that donor countries and international financial institutions would

provide speedy assistance to countries in their efforts to eradicate the scourge of drugs.

10. Mr. AMIRKHIZI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session must be fully implemented by Member States in order for real progress to be made in combating the drug problem. The Programme provided a model framework for individual countries and a foundation for further cooperation. The Islamic Republic of Iran nad been cooperating with its neighbours through the regional Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and bilateral agreements. The technical assistance and support provided by UNDCP for the activities of ECO were greatly appreciated.

11. His Government recognized the importance of a balanced approach involving the reduction of both supply and demand. His delegation did not believe that decriminalization of non-medical drug use was compatible with the international drug conventions, since that would contradict the measures taken by countries to control illicit trafficking. It could also lead to an expansion in drug abuse, with extensive harm to public health. Supply reduction and the suppression of illicit trafficking constituted a cornerstone of the country's drug policy.

12. His delegation supported the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in 1998, as it would ensure the continuing commitment of Governments in their struggle against all aspects of illicit drugs. While expressing its full support for UNDCP, his delegation was greatly concerned by the attitude taken towards that body by some donor countries, and stressed that countries with a high level of domestic consumption of illicit drugs should continue to bear a fair share of the increasing financial burden of UNDCP.

13. The role of transit countries in controlling the flow of drugs deserved fresh global consideration. Drug traffickers were using Iranian territory as the shortest land route to Europe, and as a consequence, his country had had to commit huge resources in dealing with the problem over the last decade.

14. His delegation reaffirmed the vital role of the International Narcotics Control Board as the treaty body for international drug-control conventions, and was concerned about the increasing tendency of certain States to express biased views on the policies of other States. His delegation opposed the continued use of unilateral mechanisms of evaluation, qualification and certification, as inconsistent with the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention, and as undermining multilateral instruments and mechanisms. His country was determined to continue its battle against the drug menace, and extended its full support to UNDCP at national, regional and international levels.

15. Mr. SYCHOV (Belarus), referring to item 101, and speaking also on behalf of Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, said that only joint international efforts could achieve results in combating the growing threat of organized crime. The measures taken by the United Nations to enhance practical cooperation among Member States in that field were of great importance, and must now be implemented consistently.

16. The countries on whose behalf he was speaking supported the decisions of the fifth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. They attached particular importance to its adoption of decisions by consensus, taking into account the interests of all regional groups, and were impressed by the attention focused on priority areas of concern. The United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security (A/C.3/51/L.3) and the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials (A/C.3/51/L.2), elaborated by the Commission and recommended for adoption by the General Assembly, were precisely in keeping with those considerations.

17. The Organization must continue to play a leading role in defining standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice, determining the most urgent areas for consideration. The research carried out under United Nations auspices on measures to regulate the sale of firearms and prevent theft of and illegal trafficking in motor vehicles was also commendable.

18. The countries in question supported the proposals aimed at strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. Expanding cooperation between the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and other United Nations bodies was important in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's activities. United Nations crime-prevention efforts must be reinforced by increased cooperation at the regional level.

19. The countries on whose behalf he was speaking were currently updating their legislation on crime, corruption, money laundering and illegal drug trafficking. A convention on legal assistance and interdepartmental agreements on crime prevention, drug trafficking and the exchange of information had been concluded. Mechanisms for coordinating cooperation had been established; and an office to coordinate measures to combat organized crime and other dangerous forms of crime was operating.

20. In May 1996, the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States had adopted an intergovernmental programme of joint crime-prevention measures covering the period up to the year 2000. Provision had been made for more than 10 multilateral agreements among Commonwealth member States on such questions as terrorism, computer-related crimes and money laundering.

21. Mr. SERIWA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the demand for and traffic in drugs had reached alarming proportions in all parts of the world, despite the efforts of States and international organizations. Drug trafficking had become a threat to the peace of every country, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation should be strengthened in order to confront the menace. It was important to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs, particularly among young people. The family and society as a whole must become involved, and addicts must be rehabilitated. Alternative crops must be found, and measures must be taken to prevent the use of essential chemicals for manufacturing illicit drugs. All States should ratify the relevant international conventions, and effective national legislation was needed to deal with the perpetrators of drug-related crime. Consumer and producer countries should coordinate their activities, and all States should implement the Global Programme of Action.

22. His country appreciated the role played by UNDCP and supported the proposal to hold a special session of the General Assembly in 1998.

23. Illicit drugs were not a great social problem in his country, but it recognized their evil effects, and had therefore taken part in relevant international and regional conferences, and had signed bilateral agreements and international conventions. The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was observed every year in his country, and one week was set aside annually in order to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs. Legislation had recently been passed to punish drug traffickers.

24. Mr. MESSOBOT SEP (Cameroon) said that international drug control was one of the most serious challenges to be faced by the United Nations. In his country, the problem had reached alarming proportions and was still growing rapidly. Society was, however, little aware of the dangers involved and was ill-equipped to face them. Young people, encouraged to take drugs by traffickers, thought that drug abuse was a fashion which they could adopt and then abandon at will. Although appropriate legislation was in place, the Government suffered a severe lack of financial and material means to implement it, and there had not yet been time for adequate training of public servants.

25. His Government, having early perceived the global dimension of the problem, had become a party to the relevant conventions and had taken part in regional conferences and activities. On the national level, efforts had been focused since the 1960s on the fight against drug consumption, and drastic laws had been adopted. However, it was proving difficult to cope with the magnitude of the problem, especially when the country was going through an unprecedented economic crisis. Thanks to bilateral cooperation, training sessions were regularly organized on the fight against drug trafficking. The establishment in his country of a drug treatment and rehabilitation centre to serve the whole Central African subregion was being considered, as was the introduction of scholastic programmes on drug abuse and trafficking.

26. In common with other African countries, Cameroon was unable single-handed to face drug trafficking and consumption. He therefore appealed to the international community to assist in the implementation of a declaration and plan of action for drug control adopted under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

27. Mr. ROSNES (Norway) said that his delegation supported the statement made on behalf of the European Union on agenda items 101 and 102.

28. Concerning item 158, his delegation also supported the draft United Nations framework convention against organized crime submitted by Poland (A/C.3/51/7), which was being studied with interest by the competent Norwegian authorities. Organized crime represented a threat to the political structures, economic interests, and development and stability of States, which often lacked the knowledge and means to deal with that threat. His delegation firmly believed that the fight against organized transnational crime could only be effective through international cooperation. For several decades, the Nordic States had benefited from practical cooperation in that area, most recently through the

coordination of measures to stop the gang wars and criminal activities of certain motorcycle associations.

29. Mr. BAHARUDDIN (Indonesia) said that the activities of the United Nations were an essential part of the international community's efforts to deal with drug abuse. Considerable progress had been achieved. The Global Programme of Action incorporated measures aimed at both controlling supply and reducing demand. Nevertheless, greater effort was needed to translate international recognition of the drug problem into truly effective initiatives. In particular, the lack of resources available to UNDCP must be rectified. Those countries which declared their commitment to international action, and which had the necessary financial means, must work more actively with UNDCP. Although the developing countries strongly desired to cooperate with the Programme, many lacked the resources to do so. They should be given the technical support they needed. Indonesia supported the holding of a special session of the General Assembly in 1998 on international drug control and, as a member of the preparatory body, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, looked forward to participating in the organization of the special session.

30. While drug abuse was not widespread in Indonesia, it had been identified as a transit country. His Government was tackling that problem through law enforcement and cooperation with the drug-control agencies of other countries. Indonesia would shortly ratify the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and had already ratified the 1961 and 1971 Conventions. His Government recognized the importance of prevention. In families, schools and religious institutions, young people were being taught the value of a healthy lifestyle. Those addicted to drugs received treatment and vocational training to facilitate their reintegration into society. A coordination body had been appointed to oversee efforts in the fight against drug abuse. Indonesia valued highly the role of non-governmental organizations and would shortly host in Jakarta a meeting of the International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse.

31. Indonesia was aware of the global trends in drug abuse and was therefore determined to enhance its law-enforcement capability and to strengthen cooperation at the regional and international levels.

32. Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Poland) said that Poland, the first country in its region to institute political and economic transformations several years before, was currently confronted with the phenomenon of organized crime. During the transition some faulty regulations and legal loopholes had been inevitable, and they had been exploited for criminal activities. In compliance with international instruments, his Government had penalized money laundering and had reduced bank secrecy. On the operational level, police capabilities had been widened significantly in recent years. Poland had embarked upon cooperation with law-enforcement agencies of neighbouring countries and of the United States.

33. Poland supported the idea of strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. He hoped that the current United

Nations financial crisis would not severely affect the activities of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division.

34. The draft United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security, co-sponsored by Poland, would entail a commitment by States to combat serious cross-border crimes, including terrorist crimes and trafficking in drugs and arms. His delegation attached particular importance to the provision to prevent criminals from finding a safe haven. Poland shared the view of other States that theft of motor vehicles should be reflected more fully in the programme of work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. In December 1996, Poland would host a United Nations European conference on that subject.

35. Introducing a draft resolution submitted by Poland under agenda item 158 and circulated informally, he expressed the belief that the text reflected the position of the majority of members of the Committee, and that it would be adopted by consensus. The text recognized a need for closer cooperation among States in combating organized transnational crime, bearing in mind the roles of the United Nations and regional organizations. Paragraph 2 requested the Commission to consider, as a matter of priority, the question of elaborating an international convention against organized transnational crime, taking into account views of Member States on the matter, with a view to finalizing its work on the question as soon as possible.

36. Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria) said that, as it formulated the blueprint for its activities on drug control and crime prevention in the next century, the United Nations must build on past achievements. Many useful suggestions had been made by other delegations with regard to the Organization's future work. He had noted with particular interest the draft declaration on demand reduction being elaborated by UNDCP, and the calls for increased solidarity among Member States in the fight against money laundering. The extent of drug abuse and crime was now such that no individual State could hope to tackle them alone. He was therefore concerned that efforts at the international level, under the auspices of the United Nations, were sometimes hindered by lack of resources. Additional financial means must be found, in particular, for UNDCP and for initiatives on organized transnational crime. In addition, system-wide coordination must be enhanced to ensure that existing programmes were implemented.

37. His delegation was sadly aware that the international media often portrayed Nigeria as a major drug-trafficking country. His Government recognized that criminal elements were engaged in such contemptible activities and had taken strong measures to deal with them. A national drug-control strategy had been formulated to ensure that the objectives of the Global Programme of Action were translated into practical initiatives. There was a strong emphasis on demand reduction and primary prevention. Preventive drug education would shortly be introduced into primary and secondary schools. The national drug law enforcement agency was cooperating with its counterparts in other countries to prevent the use of couriers to transfer illicit drugs. Sizeable seizures had already been made. While his Government did not seek praise for its efforts, it would appreciate the support of the international community.

38. Enhanced international cooperation was necessary in order to implement the Naples Political Declaration and the Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime. States should take immediate action on the recommendations regarding the trafficking of women and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. His delegation hoped that the proposal to elaborate an international instrument on organized transnational crime would win universal support. The Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, recently upgraded, must be given the additional resources it required to carry out its new responsibilities.

39. Mr. HABONIMANA (Burundi) said that the Governments of the African States were deeply concerned at the exacerbation of the problem of drug abuse in the region, especially among young people. The Council of Ministers of OAU had recently adopted a plan of action for drug control and had called upon member States to create national focal points to coordinate the activities of the relevant governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. In addition, UNDCP had been invited to strengthen its cooperation with OAU and to assist with the creation within the OAU secretariat of a mechanism to oversee implementation of the new plan of action. His delegation called upon the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to mobilize support from the various donors and relevant international bodies to enable developing countries to pursue more effectively the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking. The African countries in particular would benefit from such assistance.

40. Reviewing the disastrous consequences of drug abuse, both for addicts themselves and for society, he stressed that even peace and security were threatened.

41. The transitional government in Burundi had adopted an ambitious programme aimed at inculcating positive values in young people to prevent them from slipping into drug addiction and delinquency. In addition, the programme was intended to promote development associations, such as cooperatives, in order to generate employment and provide training for youth. Implementation was being hampered, however, by the sanctions unjustly imposed on Burundi by its neighbours. Schools had been closed for several months because of the lack of supplies. He appealed to the international community to convince the countries responsible of the necessity of lifting the embargo. Such a decision would facilitate the ongoing negotiations with the rebels and would hasten the return to normality of life in Burundi.

42. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme) welcomed the open and frank debate which had taken place, showing a new vitality in the Committee. It was a good omen for the preparation of the proposed special session of the General Assembly. A common language was emerging, which was more harmonious than in previous years and conducive to a shared understanding of the problems under consideration. He hoped that it would lead to a common perception of the levels of priority to be given to different issues and to the adoption of a consistent and coherent position on the part of Governments in the different forums within the United Nations system and regional organizations, extending to financial matters and priority for action. He was also encouraged by signs of a new awareness of the importance of involving civil society. Initiatives should be taken in as many countries as

possible to establish task forces and national committees for the involvement of non-governmental organizations.

43. Mr. PAPIAN (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply in reference to an earlier statement by the representative of Azerbaijan, said that the characterization of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict as being between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and references to "Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan" were misleading. The conflict was between the people of Nagorny Karabakh, who were striving for self-determination, and the Government of Azerbaijan, which refused to address their rights. The Armenian population of Nagorny Karabakh was seeking to avoid mass deportation and genocide. Since the eruption of the armed conflict, Armenia had consistently advocated its peaceful resolution through a negotiated settlement, and had made a constructive contribution to the peace process.

44. As to the references by unnamed media sources to Nagorny Karabakh as a so-called centre for the illegal production and shipment of drugs to European countries, with dozens of hectares devoted to poppies and hemp, it was difficult to respond, since Armenia had no official position on nonsense. He could only surmise that the author of that part of the Azerbaijani statement must himself have been under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs.

45. Mr. PASHAYEV (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Third Committee was not an appropriate forum for the discussion of political questions. Attempts were currently being made to resolve the problem of Armenian aggression in Nagorny Karabakh under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Each country was entitled, however, to set out the difficulties it faced in dealing with the problem of illicit drugs. His delegation had stated that the occupation of some 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan had created a power vacuum which certain elements had exploited by cultivating drugs and exporting them through Armenia. With regard to the claim that the earlier statement by the Azerbaijani delegation was the product of a sick mind, he would advise the representative of Armenia to exercise greater caution in his choice of words.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.